

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of the Claims:

1 (Currently Amended): A substrate holding device for holding a substrate, comprising:
a holding member having an atmosphere flow passage for holding said substrate;
a suction pipe for sucking an atmosphere through said atmosphere flow passage; and
a supply pipe for supplying a predetermined gas ~~through~~ to said atmosphere flow passage,

wherein said predetermined gas is supplied through said supply pipe while said atmosphere is sucked through said suction pipe, thereby to release said substrate from said holding member.

2 (Original): The substrate holding device according to claim 1, wherein
the supply rate of said predetermined gas supplied through said supply pipe for releasing said substrate is not less than the suction rate of said atmosphere sucked through said suction pipe.

3 (Original): The substrate holding device according to claim 1, further comprising
a fixing table for fixing said holding member,
wherein said holding member is removably placed on said fixing table.

4 (Original): The substrate holding device according to claim 3, wherein
said fixing table includes
a table body, and
a positioning member coupled to said table body to define a relative position of said holding member and said fixing table.

5 (Original): The substrate holding device according to claim 1, wherein said predetermined gas is an inert gas.

6 (Original): The substrate holding device according to claim 1, wherein said supply pipe includes an adjustment mechanism for adjusting the supply rate of said predetermined gas.

7 (Original): The substrate holding device according to claim 1, further comprising a guide member for guiding said substrate.

8 (Currently Amended): A substrate processing apparatus for performing a predetermined process on a substrate, comprising:

a) a substrate holding device including

a-1) a holding member having an atmosphere flow passage for holding said substrate,

a-2) a suction pipe for sucking an atmosphere through said atmosphere flow passage, and

a-3) a supply pipe for supplying a predetermined gas ~~through~~ to said atmosphere flow passage,

said predetermined gas being supplied through said supply pipe while said atmosphere is sucked through said suction pipe, thereby to release said substrate from said holding member; and

b) a processing unit for performing said predetermined process on said substrate held by said substrate holding device.

9 (Currently Amended): A method of releasing a substrate in a substrate holding device ~~having an atmosphere flow passage~~ for holding a substrate under suction using a holding member, said method comprising the steps of:

(a) sucking an atmosphere through a suction pipe ~~as a part of said atmosphere flow passage~~ from an atmosphere flow passage provided to said holding member;

(b) holding a substrate using said holding member;

(c) supplying a predetermined gas through a supply pipe ~~as a part of said atmosphere flow passage~~ toward said atmosphere flow passage; and

(d) in a state in which said step (a) continues, releasing said substrate held in said step (b), said step (d) being triggered by said step (c).

10 (Original): The method according to claim 9, wherein
in said step (d), the supply rate of said predetermined gas supplied through said supply pipe for releasing said substrate is not less than the suction rate of said atmosphere sucked through said suction pipe.

11 (Original): The method according to claim 9, wherein
in said step (c), said predetermined gas is an inert gas.

12 (Original): The method according to claim 9, wherein
said step (c) comprises the step of:

(c-1) adjusting the supply rate of said predetermined gas.

13 (Original): The method according to claim 9, further comprising the steps of:

(e) after said step (c), stopping said step (a); and

(f) after said step (e), stopping said step (c).